# FAQs FOR EMPLOYEES AND WORKERS WHO ARE FURLOUGHED

Last updated 11 November 2020

## [WHAT SHOULD I DO ABOUT EMAILS THAT CONTINUE COMING TO MY UNIVERSITY EMAIL ADDRESS?](https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/the-job-retention-scheme#collapse1961561)

If you have a work email account, you should add an out-of-office reply stating that you are currently on leave. Provide an alternative contact for any urgent queries.

Whilst you should not do any work through a work email account, the University and your department may send updates about the COVID-19 situation, social events, furlough leave or your return to work using this email address, so please monitor the email daily for this type of correspondence. If you would prefer to receive such correspondence via a personal email address, please let your manager know, and this can be arranged.  You must not read or respond to any other work-related emails during the period of furlough.

## [CAN I VOLUNTEER WHILST ON FURLOUGH LEAVE?](https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/the-job-retention-scheme#collapse1961571)

Yes, and this is encouraged by the University provided it does not provide services to or generate revenue for, or on behalf of, the University or a linked or associated organisation.

If you are performing emergency volunteer work in health or social care through the national NHS programme and are given a notice of a volunteering period of 2-4 weeks, please notify your manager, so that they can plan for you to continue this volunteering even if the furlough period is otherwise ended.

Other options for volunteering are available through [Oxford Together](https://oxfordtogether.org/) or a range of local and national charities.

## [CAN I STILL TALK TO MY WORK COLLEAGUES OR MANAGERS?](https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/the-job-retention-scheme#collapse1961576)

Yes, and we would encourage colleagues to stay in contact, but this should be social contact only: you must not perform any substantive work. You can still use the University’s MS Teams to do this and it might mean that your normal team schedules (or continues) a regular MS Teams social catch up ‘meeting’ to keep in touch with the whole team, or your manager schedules in a regular time in the week to make contact with you. You should only use this for a social catch up.

## [CAN I CONTINUE DOING TRAINING DURING FURLOUGH LEAVE?](https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/the-job-retention-scheme#collapse1961581)

Yes, you are encouraged to carry out any relevant online training whilst you are on furlough leave, provided that the training is directly relevant to your employment.

Access to a wide range of online training sessions is available from [Molly](https://skills.it.ox.ac.uk/molly) and there may be further resources available within your Department.  You might also want to explore [the resources](https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/covid-19-resources) the University has put together for staff during the pandemic.

## [HOW IS ANNUAL LEAVE TREATED?](https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/the-job-retention-scheme#collapse1961591)

Will annual continue to accrue during the period of furlough?  I have booked annual leave coming up, is that cancelled during furlough? Do I need to book annual leave if I need the time off?

Annual leave will continue to accrue during the furlough period and the University’s annual leave carry over rules apply, whether or not you are on furlough.  If you have commitments that would mean that you would be you unavailable for work with 24 hours notice during the period of furlough, you should book that period as leave. This will not ‘break’ the period of furlough.  For example, during school holidays if you have childcare responsibilities that mean that you could not return to work, with 24 hours notice, if required to do so, you should book that period as leave.

## [I AM ON FAMILY (MATERNITY/ADOPTION/SHARED PARENTAL/PATERNITY) LEAVE; WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR ME?](https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/the-job-retention-scheme#collapse1961596)

If you are furloughed whilst on the full pay portion of your leave you will continue to receive the existing rate of pay under the University’s family leave policies, if you are eligible.  If you continue your leave into a period of statutory pay or unpaid leave your furlough will end.

When your period of family leave ends, if appropriate you may be furloughed again and at that point you will revert to your normal pay but you will remain on furlough and not performing any work until the period of furlough is ended.

Employees can request to end maternity, adoption or shared parental leave early in the normal way (with 8 weeks’ notice normally required), but employees should not request to end their family leave (ie to return to work) unless they are ready to return to work at any time, as the furlough period could be ended at short notice.

## [I AM A VARIABLE HOURS EMPLOYEE; WHAT IS MY NORMAL PAY?](https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/the-job-retention-scheme#collapse1961601)

If you have been employed for 12 months or more, you will be paid the highest of the following three calculations:

same month’s earnings from the previous year; or

average monthly earnings for the 2019-2020 tax year; or

earnings they would have received under any prior commitment, e.g. existing rota, agreement for special paid leave made before the government guidance was issued, or other exceptional reason.

If you have been employed for less than 12 months, you will be paid your average monthly earnings since you started work for the University until the date you are furloughed.

Note that your pay calculation will be based on pay received under your variable hours contract (and any casual work where applicable). Any earnings received under a previous fixed hours contract within the calculation period will not be included.

## [I AM A WORKER; WHAT IS MY NORMAL PAY AND HOW LONG WILL IT CONTINUE?](https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/the-job-retention-scheme#collapse1961606)

Workers who are engaged with flexible hours, and who are only entitled to receive pay for hours they are assigned and work, have been offered continuing normal pay on a discretionary basis using the same calculation as for variable hours employees (see FAQ above) through to the end of their assignment. This same calculation will continue during furlough leave, but will still end at the end date of your assignment.

## [I AM ON A FIXED-TERM CONTRACT THAT IS DUE TO EXPIRE SOON; WILL THIS CHANGE IF I AM FURLOUGHED?](https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/the-job-retention-scheme#collapse1961611)

Unless your contract is renewed or you are redeployed, your employment will still end on the end date of your fixed-term contract. The University is working with grant funding bodies to agree the circumstances in which any funding that is recouped through the furlough scheme might be used to fund short contract extensions in some cases. This is dependent upon a range of factors including the availability of work, and the possibility of extending research projects and would be discussed with you as part of the end of fixed-term contract process.

Read more about the University’s efforts to support fixed term contract staff, including by negotiating with grant funding bodies on the [Research Services website.](https://researchsupport.admin.ox.ac.uk/covid-19#tab-1953806)

## [MY CONTRACT IS DUE TO EXPIRE SOON - IF THE GOVERNMENT SCHEME PAYS 80% OF SALARY, WHY COULD THE UNIVERSITY NOT FUND THE EXTENSION OF MY CONTRACT FOR THE PERIOD OF THE FURLOUGH SCHEME AND JUST PAY ME 80% OF MY SALARY?](https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/the-job-retention-scheme#collapse2013111)

The University has committed to paying all furloughed staff at 100% of their usual rate of pay.  Also, the CJRS funds are capped at £2,500 per month and do not cover employer NI or pension costs so in most circumstances the costs of furloughing an employee are significant, despite the government funding.  The level of reimbursement from January 2021 is not yet known.